

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 17, 2004 LB 1083

need community mental health services. A few months ago, I took a day off work. I actually went out to the Hastings Regional Center and talked to all the employees who were working there. I toured the regional center, I drove around and looked at all the buildings. And probably the most impressive part of my visit to that facility was actually going out on ACT visits with the nurses. ACT is the Assertive Community Treatment program that is what Hastings is already doing that's part of the big picture that LB 1083 is all about. During those visits, the nurses are assisting people who have been transitioned from the Hastings Regional Center with activities of daily living, with living in the community, all the kinds of things that Senator Byars and others have talked about that are essential in order to get people from being institutionalized. And I think we have, as far as the medical model and the social model, moved away from institutionalization of the mentally ill. And the ACT program is a great program. And so that's why I was a little bit bothered when I got this communication today. And I see Senator Wehrbein is leaving, but I was going to ask him a question at...later. But I'll just read the letter first. This is a letter I received about the ACT funding. And I'm a little bit concerned about it: Hello, Senator Combs. Since Governor Johanns says that he wants to get Medicaid monies for assistance with mental health services, I think it's rather suspect that he has not signed the ACT regulations, which would allow us to bill right at \$900,000 per year for the ACT team services. And I understand that's Medicaid dollars. The hearing for the approval of these regulations was held on December 18, and we understand that it is still lying awaiting a signature for seven weeks. I really don't know the answer to why it's there. Prior to that, it was being reviewed by the legal team and office staff. We wonder if the delay is part of tactics to help get LB 1083 passed, which, I think LB 1083 is a great bill, but if my ACT program that I went out there to take a look at, that I think is a great part of the mental health reform, is being short-shrifted, then I don't like that. Another matter, I hope you're aware that the Regional Center at Hastings no longer providing acute services--which we're already aware of. Since Dr. Dyer's departure to Kansas, we've sent all the acute care patients to the Norfolk center, and they have sent the residential service clients to HRC. And according to their CEO,